Book Reviews

Sarah BACHELARD. *Resurrection and Moral Imagination*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. 209 pp.

Sarah Bachelard is an Anglican priest and theologian in Canberra, Australia. She is the leader and founder of Benedictus Contemplative Church, an ecumenical community with silent meditation at its heart. In her book she asks "How does an understanding of ethics as sourced in and responsive to an eschatological reality of living and reconciling love shape our moral lives, or provide guidance for moral discernment and choice?" (119). *Resurrection and Moral Imagination* is thus a spiritual reflection on fundamental Christian ethics.

Curiously, the two people who launched her on her spiritual ethical reflection were the philosophers Raimond Gaita and Iris Murdock. Bachelard acknowledges that their rejection of any theological articulation or development of their approaches must be taken seriously by any theologian; but she also insists that the appeal to absolute or transcendent goodness is necessary, according to both Gaita's and Muredock's view, for a proper understanding of ethics. For Bachelard, moral responsiveness is not primarily about making moral choices, but about "[...] participating in the dynamic and project of divine life" (56). She calls this 'resurrection ethics', which can also be described as a Christian contemplative or wisdom ethic. She explains it in six chapters.

In the first chapter she argues in non-theological terms (using Gaita and Murdoch) for the significance of some kind of appeal to transcendence in ethics. In chapter two she explores transcendence theologically, in terms of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the next three chapters, Bachelard develops her theological ethics based on the resurrection, not focusing on particular moral issues or problems but stressing moral thinking and judgment, and the formation of the moral self.

In chapter six she explores the practice of 'resurrection ethics' in the context of secularization, the role of the church, and the possibilities of public moral discourse, at a time when, as she acknowledges, the language of faith has seemingly gone dead for large parts of our culture. Here she argues (correctly I suggest) that in the Christian perspective – correctly understood – nothing by definition is profane or unclean. Only those who profess a false 'sacred' hold such a position. "'The whole point of Christianity is to bring down the sort of wall of protective sacredness which makes universality impossible by having a necessary 'other' over against whom we make ourselves 'good'" (178).

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Chapter six of *Resurrection and Moral Imagination* makes the book worth having if one only reads this chapter. It reminded me of an observation made years ago by Leuven Professor J. H. Walgrave: if people had a correct understanding of Christian spirituality there would be no need for theological ethics.

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Françoise BAYLIS and Carolyn MCLEOD (eds.). *Family-Making: Contemporary Ethical Challenges. Oxford: Oxford University Press*, 2014. 316 pp.

The assumption of the standard of a nuclear family consisting of both parents having a genetic relationship ('bionormativity') underlies many legal and ethical assumptions and often guides technological development as well. Many arguments in the recent debate on so-called 'three parent babies', for example, assume that parenthood is defined by the amount of DNA someone contributes. The rationale behind the development of such technologies is that it would allow women at risk of transferring a mitochondrial disease to their offspring to reproduce with their own nuclear DNA, and that this desire for children who are genetically 'one's own' is a sufficient reason to investigate and deploy experimental reproductive techniques. The volume *Family Making* sets out to explore alternatives to traditional ways of having children, and investigates the similarities and differences between adoption and assisted reproduction in moral debate. By doing so it also challenges the underlying bionormativity guiding many current debates on reproduction and parenting.

In their first chapter, Brighouse and Swift describe how parent-child relations contribute to the flourishing of adults. They argue convincingly that adoptive parents can fully realize the value of parenting, that genetic ties are not necessary to accomplish this, and that this value is not dependent on a biological connection. In the next chapter, Brennan offers an introduction to the goods of childhood, which she sees as intrinsic and not only dependent on the adult a child will become. As such, parents constantly balance things that are good for the child-as-child and things that are good for the child as adults, which she calls a complex and creative task. Charlotte Witt critiques the bionormative concept of the family in the third chapter, also from the perspective of a parent of an adoptive daughter. She challenges the ideas of Velleman and Wilson, who overstress the role of (genetic) likeness or similarity. She demonstrates that likeness and self-understanding is not necessarily only available through genetic ties. In the fourth chapter, Blake *et al.* describe empirical evidence about the consequences of adoption and assisted reproduction. They claim that most 'non-traditional' families are doing well. They also argue that although difficulties may exist in families with adopted children, this needs to be weighed up against the kind of life the adopted child would have had if he or she had not been adopted. In the fifth chapter, Christine Overall likewise challenges the idea that procreating genetically is more valuable than adoption. She describes certain arguments that support this idea

and successfully demonstrates that these arguments are inadequate, notably also naming the cost of creating new children over adopting children in terms of resource depletion and waste generation. In chapter six, Tina Rulli offers a convincing account of why adoption may be of unique value for all prospective parents – rather than be an option if genetic reproduction fails – as it allows an impartial concern for a child in need to be integrated into one's own personal perspective, and hence is an example of the human capacity for moral compassion, but also a demonstration of the unique characteristics of the parent-child relationship as such. The next part of the book focuses on state interests. In a chapter on state regulation and assisted reproduction, De Wispelaere and Weinstock assess the question whether Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) should be permitted and subsidized. They do so in light of the fact that many existing children may be in need of adoptive parents: is the genetic tie to one's child so important that this trumps the need of these potential adoptees? They state that in principle the interests of children in need of a family should guide state policy, perhaps more than the interests of prospective parents to reproduce genetically. But they also admit that a ban on ART is not feasible, and that a partial subsidy of ART may offer a practical solution between the interests of infertile parents and adoptees. In chapter eight, McLeod and Botterell assess the rationale behind the fact that the process of adopting a child involves fulfilling licensing requirements whereas this is not required of parents engaging in biological reproduction or ART. They argue that this is unjustified, and that it further reinforces the belief that biological families are superior. Julie Crawford discusses 'second-parent' adoption, the fact that for lesbian couples the partner who does not give birth to the child has to adopt him or her afterwards, whereas fatherhood is assumed in cases of marriage. She points out that this practice exposes a more general assumption, namely that those who cannot reproduce naturally must prove their fitness through other means. The following chapters discuss the responsibilities of parents in the context of ART and adoption. James Lindemann Nelson argues that the use of ART to have children generates special responsibilities: when donor gametes are used, the causal story of a child's conception is complicated and the procedure of ART can increase risks to children's health. Mianna Lotz describes the vulnerability of the adoptive child and how this also induces special parental obligations with regard to intra-familial openness about the child's origins. Heath Fogg Davis describes the obligations white parents have towards their adopted black children. She argues that these parents have the obligation to make sure that their children are raised in neighbourhoods that are not predominantly white, in light of the identity formation of their children. The final three chapters deal with controversial practices. Kimberly Leighton states that the arguments against anonymous gamete donation that make use of an analogy with adoption naturalize the value of genetic relatedness. She claims that such arguments assume that anyone, be they adopted or conceived with donor gametes, who does not know his or her genetic origins is somewhat lacking in terms of identity. As a response, she suggests that being adopted may engender alternative understandings of the meanings of relatedness. Françoise Baylis argues that transnational commercial contract

pregnancy in India exploits women and harms children born out of such a commercial and potentially exploitative practice and that it should be abolished. It is interesting to note that since the publication of this book, Thailand has suspended international adoption, after an Australian couple had abandoned their child with Down syndrome and left him with the Thai surrogate mother. In the last chapter, Jennifer Parks evaluates aged parenting, and specifically older mothers who become pregnant after the menopause. She describes existing arguments against allowing older mothers to have children and states that a more in-depth exploration of the obligations of parents to potential offspring is needed to gain clarity.

This volume raises and covers many interesting questions on the role of parenting and on how to weigh questions regarding the interests of prospective parents and the wellbeing of children. It clearly challenges the notion of normativity and demonstrates that much conceptual work is still needed in order to come to satisfying conclusions. The fact that many of the contributors refer to their own experiences or use real-life accounts makes this volume both accessible to a wider audience and in my opinion more valuable. A must read for bioethicists considering the ethics of reproduction and for anyone interested in the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding parenting.

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Michael E. BRATMAN. *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 219 pp.

In this book, Michael Bratman offers a detailed and comprehensive presentation of his view on shared agency: the 'planning theory of modest sociality'. The book integrates ideas and themes from a number of essays on shared activity and related topics Bratman published after the appearance of his influential *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), which deals with individual agency. The guiding thought – in those essays as well as in *Shared Agency* – is that modest sociality can be conservatively understood on the basis of the well-perceived planning theory of individual agency developed in his 1987 book.

Bratman's exposition of the 'building blocks' of his view (chapters 2-3), of their integration into an overall theory (chapter 4), of the merits of that theory over (non-conservative) rivals (chapters 5-6), of its application to the phenomenon of shared deliberation (chapter 7), as well as his characterization of what exactly his project is (and is not) about (chapter 1), is lucid and detailed, making for a very readable book (although it tends to be slightly repetitive, and its sophistication at times yields somewhat long-winded formulations). As a result, I would say that Bratman has succeeded in his aim "[...] to lay out [the] planning model of our sociality in sufficient detail and with sufficient clarity so that we can assess its merits" (ix). Since Bratman attaches more importance to "the overall contours of this theory" than to "the totality of

details [...] develop[ed] along the way" (ix), I will mostly attend to the former in this review.

As said, Bratman's target is 'modest sociality': cases of small-scale, stable groups of adult human beings acting together, where there are no asymmetric authority relations between the participants (7-8). In particular, his concern is with the action-theoretic aspects of our sociality, not with moral or otherwise evaluative aspects thereof. His typical examples include singing a duet and painting a house together. Bratman's 'basic thesis' (85-87) defends the 'continuity thesis' (8), which states, in a nutshell, that "modest sociality is interconnected planning agency" (87). The bulk of the book consists of a detailed exploration of what makes up this 'interconnectedness'. The project is "reductive" (114, 155): Bratman intends to show that his plan-theoretic understanding of individual agency provides all the conceptual, metaphysical and normative materials one needs in order to construct the respective ingredients of modest sociality.

The bigger action-theoretic picture in which Bratman locates this project is shaped by a 'guiding idea' he borrows from Grice (25, note 66): the methodology of 'creature construction', which is "[...] to understand more complex forms of agency by building stepwise from simpler forms" (25). Thus, there is a basic notion of simple belief-desire agency, which roughly coincides with the influential causal theory of action famously defended by Davidson ("Action, Reasons and Causes," *Journal of Philosophy* LX/23: 685-700, 1963). From here we get to individual planning agency by adding planning states (intentions). This is a conceptually and normatively non-conservative addition that is, however, metaphysically conservative: although it involves roles and norms that go beyond what mere belief-desire agency involves, it can still be located in the natural causal order along the familiar lines of Davidson's causal theory of action (although Bratman is, as always, careful not to overstate his case here; see, for example, 46; 48). Bratman's reasons for endorsing planning states as a substantive addition to belief-desire agency are (at least) threefold: they play an important role in temporally extended agency, in self-governance, and in our present topic – modest sociality. Bratman expresses his faith in the usefulness of this addition in his slogan "the fecundity of planning structures" (for example, 4; 11; 151).

Bratman conceives of his approach to modest sociality as one that lies in the 'middle territory' between two alternative positions (5-7). On the one hand, we have a (roughly) game-theoretic approach to sociality, which (he claims) is too individualistic in spirit, since it comes down to individual action given *expectations* concerning the behaviour of others, and thus fails to capture true sociality, which involves *intentions* concerning the behaviour of others (see below). On the other hand, we have non-conservative approaches, such as that of Margaret Gilbert (discussed by Bratman in detail in chapter 5), which impose on sociality features (irreducible 'joint commitments', in Gilbert's case) that at best characterize only a proper subset of cases of sociality. Bratman's 'middle way' is individualistic (*per* the continuity thesis), but seeks nevertheless to arrive at a notion of modest sociality that constitutes a genuine addition to individual agency (and hence makes for a genuine step in his methodology of creature construction). Note, by the way, that there are innovative game-theorists who incorporate

non-conservative additions along the lines of Searle's 'we-intentions' into their game-theoretic understanding of shared action (see, for example, Michael Bacharach. *Beyond Individual Choice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). An odd 'middle way', if its extremes can be coherently combined.

Given Bratman's limitation to small-scale, modest cases of shared agency, one wonders why he insists so strongly on the continuity thesis. After all, if, in the end, non-conservative resources turn out to be required for more involved cases of shared agency, there is little reason to exclude these resources from our account of modest sociality. Bratman in fact makes a similar argument when considering the possibility of mere belief-desire-based forms of shared agency. Given that we humans can form planning states, he says, we may as well use them to understand sociality (26; 151). Moreover, given that no *comprehensive* account of our sociality is being proposed, his appeal to parsimony in defence of the continuity thesis (105-106) has little force – parsimony, we should remember, only comes in 'in the endgame'. I suspect, however, that in the background there is either a more robust continuity thesis at play, which Bratman (laudably) downscales only because he feels that the said more robust thesis cannot be substantiated yet (one could read 119-120 this way), or else that there is an assumption at play as to a fundamental difference between modest and more involved cases of sociality, a new 'step' in creature construction, which Bratman (laudably) does not include in his theory for similar reasons.

In any event, let us focus now on the contours of Bratman's construction. The first (and by now familiar) step is to move from "we intend to *J*" via "we intend that we *J*" to "each of us intends that we *J*" (by reading the "we" in subject position distributively; see 41). Having thus arrived at a collection of in-principle unproblematic *individual* intentions in place of the initial *shared* intention, the next task is to construe the contents of these intentions in a non-circular way. Most importantly, the joint activity *J* in question must, in basic cases, be neutral with regard to its 'joint-ness' (just as an account of individual agency must assume, in a basic case of individual intentionality "I intend to *A*", that *A* is neutral with regard to its intentionality – see 45). Of course, we normally do not talk or think in terms of such neutral activity-types (both in the joint and in the individual case). Bratman takes this to be the result of a "conceptual ratcheting" (47) that enables agents with the basic capacity for shared (or intentional) action to develop conceptions of activities that are no longer neutral (such as promising, or praying) – and this may then end up being the standard situation.

But let us continue. Given this non-circular initial understanding of the contents of intentions of the form "I intend that we *J*", further ingredients need to be added in order to narrow down the range of cases that involve such intentions to only those that we take to be cases of modest sociality. Most centrally, the intentions of each must *interlock*, i.e. appropriately specify the partners' corresponding intentions (to exclude, for example, a 'mafia case' [49], where we both intend that we go to NYC by knocking the other out and putting him/her in the trunk of our car). Given the plan-theoretic understanding of intentions, it follows that each participant is disposed to develop relevant sub-plans that 'mesh' with the others'.

We now have the first element of the 'compressed' version of Bratman's construction (103; 152) on the table. Here is a version thereof that is even more compressed:

> A. *Intention condition*: We each intend that we *J*, and that we *J* by way of each of our intentions and by way of 'relevant mutual responsiveness' (see E below).
> B. *Belief condition*: We each believe that if our intentions in A persist, they will lead to our *J*-ing by way of 'relevant mutual responsiveness' (see E below), and we believe that there is persistence interdependence between the intentions in A.
> C. *Interdependence condition*: There is persistence interdependence between the intentions in A.
> D. *Common knowledge condition*: It is common knowledge that A-D.

These conditions suffice for shared *intention*. Resulting activity is *modest sociality* when:

> E. *Mutual responsiveness condition*: Our shared intention to *J* leads to our *J*-ing by way of public mutual responsiveness in sub-intention and action that tracks the end of the joint activity by way of the relevant intentions of each.

Bratman shows in some detail how the relevant roles and norms of individual planning agency (including "coordinating, structuring, organizing, guiding, and settling roles" [27], and "norms of consistency, agglomeration, means-end coherence, and stability" [15]), applied to situations thereof satisfying A-E, give rise to distinctive roles and norms of modest sociality (including roles of "social coordination and organization in relevant thought and action", and "norms of social agglomeration and consistency, social coherence, and social stability" [27]). Thereby, he aims to show that his *conceptually* conservative construction in terms of conditions A-E suffices for an equally conservative account of *norms* of social rationality.

I should make two remarks about this construction. First, as Bratman stresses several times, his proposal is meant to provide only *sufficient* conditions for modest sociality, not necessary ones – since it might be that "shared intention is multiply realizable" (36). At times, this restriction creates tensions, for instance when he includes elements that would be too strong when considered as necessary conditions (for example, 77). Secondly, the common knowledge condition D implies, together with C, that the parties involved *know* that their intentions are interdependent. This makes the *belief* with the same content, cited in B, redundant.

Each of the five elements A-E invites interesting questions, many of which Bratman treats in detail, and often resolves quite convincingly. Let me mention five of the more central ones (in my view), which I will not go into here. (i) The intentions cited in A (famously) violate the 'own-action condition', which some find unacceptable; (ii) Whether it makes sense to separate belief in the effectiveness of one's intention (as in B) from that intention itself is questionable; (iii) Likewise, the reflexivity involved in the intentions in A – in effect, it says that I intend that we *J* in part by way of *my own intention* – is problematic (I return to this briefly below); (iv) The interdependence in C makes

it difficult to see how such interdependent intentions could be formed in the first place; (v) How exactly we should understand the 'common knowledge' in D is a matter of considerable dispute. In the remainder of this review, however, I will focus on a different objection to Bratman's proposal (due to Christine Korsgaard) that he briefly discusses on 100-101. This objection strikes me as most central to the very viability of his project of accounting for modest sociality in individualistic terms (as opposed to objections to one or another of his 'building blocks'), and Bratman's response strikes me as inadequate.

Here is the objection. If I intend that we *J* by way of each of our intentions that we *J*, "I may seem to be seeing your intention and your agency as, at bottom, a means to what I intend – namely, our joint activity" (100). Let me first rephrase Korsgaard's point somewhat, without relying too much on the notion of 'means'. For this reformulation and the ensuing discussion, I take my cue from Sebastian Rödl's recent paper "Intentional Transaction" (*Philosophical Explorations* 17/3: 304-316, 2014). The intention in question is *my individual* intention, and the resulting action is *my individual* action. As with any intentional action, it is *one* action (and not a concatenation of separate actions, say) because *it* is intended: the intention, one could say, is the principle of unity of the action. To illustrate: if I (intentionally) paint walls A and B in the morning, and C and D in the afternoon, these two actions may be sub-actions of my intentionally painting the entire house, but they can also be separate actions (I might not even know that A-D are walls of the same house) – my having or lacking an intention to paint the entire house makes the relevant difference. Thus, if I do something intentionally, whatever elements figure in that action form part of my 'sub-plan(s)' aimed at completing that action. Whether these elements are sub-actions, repeated attempts, contributions by tools I use, or contributions by other things or processes that happen to be in my environment (such as the wind in the event of starting a camp fire, or an intentional agent lifting the other half of the piano), they are all unified into one 'temporally extended' individual action by my intention. One could use the term 'means' to cover anything that figures as such an element in an intentional action. And in that sense, it is indeed true that, in a case satisfying Bratman's conditions, the other's intended contribution is a means towards my end – the joint activity. If you and I have such Bratmanian intentions, and execute these successfully, there are thus two separate individual actions unified by two separate individual intentions, each treating the other's contribution as a means (in the specified sense).

Now consider Bratman's reply to Korsgaard. It is that, by parity of reasoning, I would then also treat *myself* as a means, since my intention involves *each* of our intentions that we *J* – it is a *reflexive* intention, as I already noted. And, since that seems to be a case of 'treating as a means' that is innocuous, we should conclude that the sense in which I am treating *the other* as a means is an innocuous one too (101).

However, there is no parity of reasoning here. *My* intention ensures the unity of my action, *yours* does not. That makes for a relevant difference. 'Treating as a means', as circumscribed above, applies to *elements of* a given action, the unity of which is provided by the associated intention. The elements make sense in the context of

the overarching intention. In particular, your intention (and ensuing action) occupies a certain place in the context of my overarching intention that we *J*. My own intention occupies no such place in that context; it does not make a distinct contribution that makes sense in its light. Rather, it *is* that context. (One can see why there is room for doubts about the very idea of reflexive intentions – see (iii) above.)

The upshot is, then, that Bratman's construction does not yield single joint activities, but always yields multiple individual activities. In his own words: it yields "interconnected planning agency". Bratmanian shared agency is thus more like doing two accidentally related actions (first painting walls A and B, then C and D) than like doing one unified action (painting the house *by* first painting A and B, then C and D). And this is not in line with the examples he uses – such as painting the house together. In such cases, it is clear that our respective contributions (my painting walls A and B, your painting walls C and D) do indeed relate as means (in the specified sense) to *one* overarching intentional action (our painting the house). And that, in turn, presupposes that there is *one* intention unifying our respective contributions, and not two.

If this line of reasoning is on the right track, reductive projects like Bratman's are doomed from the very start. Yet I do think that Bratman is right, in a sense, in insisting on the 'continuity thesis', and, moreover, that he points us in the right direction insofar as what we need to account for 'modest sociality' is the same as what we need to account for 'temporally extended agency': a proper account of intention. My reasons for endorsing the continuity thesis, however, are different. Intentions are intentions, whether they are *mine* or *ours* – there is no need to posit "a new and non-reducible attitude of we-intention" *à la* Searle (154). Here, I would argue that an intention is essentially a *first-personal* attitude – an attitude such that the person (or persons) who has (have) it is/are identical with the person (or persons) who figure/s as its subject. Thus understood, intentions simply admit of both singular and plural instances. The central question is, therefore, how we should understand the first person, and in particular the first person plural. Unfortunately, Bratman does not reflect on these questions at all. Where he discusses what "we" refers to in a case of shared agency "we are *J*-ing" (i.e. in chapter 6), he takes it to refer to a 'group agent' (though not to a 'group subject'), thereby ignoring both that 'we' is the *first person* plural pronoun and that 'we' is the first person *plural* pronoun (and one wonders what is left of the first person plural pronoun if both of these aspects are neglected). I would very much like to learn what Bratman thinks about these questions.

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Sara Rachel CHANT, Frank HINDRIKS, Gerhard PREYER (eds.). *From Individual to Collective Intentionality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 240 pp.

The title *From Individual to Collective Intentionality* can be understood in different ways. It could mean that a path is shown that leads from individual to collective intentionality.

It could also mean that a range of topics is covered including individual and collective intentionality. Additionally, 'intentionality' could either refer to intentionality in the context of action theory, i.e. intentionality as it occurs in intentional actions, intending actions and intentions, or 'intentionality' could refer to the general feature of our mind that it is about something. After reading the book, I am still not sure which understanding of the title fits best. Sara Rachel Chant, Frank Hindriks and Gerhard Preyer present a series of essays that loosely revolve around, inspire or follow from the discussion of collective intentionality as it is known from the debate of collective agency, but the essays are not cast in a coherent, overarching story about how to get from individual to collective intentionality. As such, it is not an introductory guide, but a display of the current philosophical debate for the advanced and interested reader.

The book contains an introduction and is divided into two parts, the titles of which do not share the main title's ambiguity. The first part is called "Collective Attitudes and Actions", the second part is entitled "Collective Rationality". Given the range of topics addressed in the essays and the lack of an overall story line, I will simply go through the book essay by essay to provide pointers for readers familiar with the topic of collective intentionality or social ontology in general.

The "Introduction" (1-9) written by the editors is a brief, well written reminder of the four most influential approaches to collective agency by Michael Bratman, Raimo Tuomela, John Searle and Margret Gilbert. They call them the 'Big Four' of collective intentionality and add Phillip Pettit as the 'Big Fifth' when it comes to social ontology. There can be little doubt that these philosophers have had enormous influence on research into collective agency, but I am not sure that limiting the most important position to these five is still justified. Over the past decade or so, research into collective agency has started to diversify and broaden. Where Michael Bratman focuses on a demanding form of shared cooperative activity ("Shared Cooperative Activity." *The Philosophical Review* 101: 327-341, 1992), for example, James Butterfill and Elisabeth Pacherie argue for a much less demanding conception of doing things together in order to account for simpler forms of acting together observed in infants, but also in everyday interaction ("Joint Action and Development." *Philosophical Quarterly* 61: 23-47, 2012; "Intentional Joint Agency: Shared Intention Lite." *Synthese* 190: 1817-1839, 2013). Additionally, psychological research conducted, for example, by Michael Tomasello has prominently approached the topic of understanding and sharing intention ("Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28: 675-691, 2005), which invites interdisciplinary dialogue. Many others have made important contributions and vivid discussions at many conferences and workshops have been observed over the past years. Given the advanced character of the essays, I would have liked the introduction to consolidate the topic of collective agency and intentionality in light of these discussions, rather than extending the 'Big Four' with a fifth person. Nonetheless, the book is introduced clearly and the outline of the essays is a helpful guide.

Deborah Tollefson starts the book off with the only essay that actually sketches a path from individual intentionality to collective intentionality. Starting from Pacherie's

dynamic theory of intentions for individuals ("Toward a Dynamic Theory of Intentions." In *Does Consciousness Cause Behaviour?* Edited by Susan Pockett, 145-168. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), Tollefsen essentially reproduces "A Dynamic Theory of Shared Intention and the Phenomenology of Joing Action" (13-33). As with Pacherie, it is refreshing to see that Tollefson is not too shy to involve psychological and neurophysiological research to address the complications that come with the transition from the individual to the collective level. While Pacherie has her own theory of a 'lite' version of shared intention based on her theory (see above), Tollefson's essay can be seen as an alternative path from individual to collective intentionality with a focus on the dynamics and mechanisms required for joint agency.

With the essay of Karlo Miller and Raimo Tuomela, one of the 'Big Four' makes sure that the reader is left with "Collective Goals Analyzed" (34-60). Indeed, concepts of shared, common, joint or collective goals are part of almost every account of collective agency. Yet, an in-depth philosophical discussion of these notions is hard to find. Compared to Tuomela's first discussion on goals 25 years ago, Miller and Tuomela now draw heavily on the resources of their theory of collective intentionality. Still, the essay provides independent insights about goals relevant not only on the collective level, but also on the individual level, and everyone interested in this topic should read through the text carefully.

Frederik Schmitt goes on to discuss "Group Belief and Acceptance" (61-96). Bratman used these notions to effectively create a two-tier model of deliberation. While beliefs provide a default cognitive background for practical reasoning, acceptances allow us deliberation where we lack beliefs, engage in counterfactual reasoning, need to make compromises, or simply need to simplify matters ("Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context." *Mind* 101: 293-310, 1992). This model allows social deliberation without anyone literally sharing beliefs. In particular, a group itself need not have beliefs, but simply policies in place that give weight to particular premises for deliberation ("Dynamics of Sociality." In *Shared Intentions and Collective Responsibility*. Edited by Peter A. French and Howard K. Wettstein, 1-15. Boston, MA: Blackwell, 2006). Schmitt argues against Bratman and the idea that belief and acceptance are genuinely different attitudes. Instead, he argues that acceptances are inferred from beliefs and, consequently, require beliefs. Since groups can accept proposition – he continues with no detailed explanation of how a group as such can do this – they must also belief.

Where Schmitt makes a contribution to defend supra-individualism, the next essay by Robert Rupert argues "Against Group Cognitive States" (97-111). While Rupert does not and does not claim to present an actual argument against group cognitive states, he formulates naturalistic doubts that group states can play the causal role that he expects cognitive states to play. Indirectly, Rupert rejects the notion of collective rationality discussed in the second part of the book, by claiming that a cognitive architecture on group level has not yet been shown to play a "privileged role in causal-explanations of intelligent behavior" (107).

A completely different, non-naturalistic approach is chosen by Kirk Ludwig in the last essay of the first part. Ludwig analyzes "The Ontology of Collective Action" (112-133)

by looking at the semantics of action sentences involving groups. Essentially, Ludwig gives a detailed instruction on how to replace action sentences involving first person plural or singular plural nouns by action sentences that only involve individuals agents and events. From the fact that this is possible without a loss of meaning, Ludwig concludes that talk of group actions is useful talk, but justifies no assumptions of actual group agents or actions.

The second part is devoted to the topic of collective rationality inspired by Pettit and List's theory of group agency (*Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Abraham Sesshu Roth starts this part with a discussion of the well know 'discursive dilemma' made popular by Pettit ("Groups with Minds of Their Own." In *Socializing Metaphysics: The Nature of Social Reality*. Edited by Frederick F. Schmitt, 93-167. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). In contrast to Pettit and List, Roth solves the dilemma with the resources of individual rationality and rejects the idea that we need a genuine collective rationality. The essay should be understood in combination with his paper "Prediction, Authority, and Entitlement in Shared Activity (*Noûs* 48: 626-652, 2014), in which he develops an individualistic account of shared activity based on the idea that agents can act on other agent's intentions and the participant's entitlement to the reasons for these intentions.

In much the same spirit, Melinda Bonni Fagan asks "Do Groups Have Scientific Knowledge?" (163-186). While the title suggests that this essay should belong in the first part of the book, Fagan quickly points at the important distinction between having knowledge and acquiring knowledge and that the latter can be irreducibly collective, while the former need not. Indeed, she argues, that the process of acquiring scientific knowledge is inherently collective, while scientific knowledge is better seen as a summative aggregation of personal knowledge. I suspect that, concerning collective rationality, the lesson to take away is that epistemic mechanisms – rational and collective in character – do not justify the ascription of intentional states to the structure that owns these mechanisms.

Paul Weirich's analysis of "Collective Rationality's Roots" (187-206) goes a step further and claims that, quite generally, collective rationality can be fully accounted for by individual rationality. All we need to do, so it seems, is to allow rational agents to be smart. If we allow agents to make practical tradeoffs, consider diachronic dynamics and social dynamics including other agent's actions and responses, there is always a rational story to tell about how rational individual actions lead to rational overall acts.

Last but not lease, Julian Nida-Rümelin also advocates a broader view of rationality to allow "Structural Rationality and Collective Intentions" (207-222) to be naturally compatible. Instead of arguing for rational solutions case by case like the previous author, Nida-Rümelin proposes a general principle of 'structural rationality' from which cooperatively rational decision-making flows naturally. The principle of structural rationality, accordingly, claims that acts can be rational if they are embedded within a structure of actions. It is not clear to me what is exactly required of the structure to provide such rationality, but given that this can be spelled out, Nida-Rümelin sketches convincingly how individual, structurally rational behaviour provides a basis for cooperation and collective intentions.

Given that Pettit was rendered the 'Big Fifth' of social ontology, it was a little surprising for me to see the second part be finished without an essay that actually speaks for the type of collective rationality and the corresponding social ontology introduced by Pettit. All the essays in the second part are reductive and, in parts, extremely sceptical about the reality of group agents in their own right. Clearly, the first part of the book is more diverse in this respect. Overall, *From Individual to Collective Intentionality* provides a series of well written, focused essays within the broad contemporary discussion of the transition from the individual to the collective.

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Terence CUNEO. *Speech and Morality: On the Metaethical Implications of Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 288 pp.

A pivotal point of disagreement in metaethics is whether moral facts exist, and if they do, what their 'existence' amounts to. Traditionally, the pro and contra arguments for either position advance by considerations about the phenomenon of morality itself. Terence Cuneo's ambitious and innovative book is an attempt to protrude from the thicket of metaethics by looking at the phenomenon of speaking. He argues that thinking about "what it is to speak" will have "far-reaching metaethical implications" (27) and tries to show that morality "lies deep in the structure of reality" (205).

Cuneo's overarching thesis is that the phenomenon of speech supports moral realism, which he interprets as the conjunction that moral facts exist and that they are "recognition-independent" (188). This thesis is supported by his 'Speech Act argument', which he defends through the two parts of his book. In the first part, Cuneo argues that speech (which comprises both audible as well as inaudible utterings, such as gestures) is a "thoroughly normative phenomenon" (77). Moreover, some of the normative features of speaking are, Cuneo argues, *best understood* as being moral in the recognition-independent sense (107). In the second part, Cuneo argues that competing metaethical positions either cannot explain the phenomenon of speech or do not provide sufficient reasons to reject the existence of moral facts. He engages with selected arguments of Error Theory, Expressivism, and Constructivism and finds them wanting.

Chapter 1 serves as a general introduction and overview of Cuneo's argument and provides a clear and concise statement of his objectives. The Speech Act Argument is explained and Cuneo points to its two central premises: first, a defence of the normative theory of speech and, second, the argument that some of the normative features of speech are moral.

Chapter 2 provides the argument for the Normative Theory of Speech. Following J. L. Austin, Cuneo shows why a single speech act should be thought of as consisting of multiple act-tokens, for instance the gesture of pointing to a door and the related command to leave the room. This creates the problem of explaining the cohesion between different act-tokens. Cuneo focuses his argument on the distinction between

'locutionary acts', acts of uttering or inscribing sentences, and 'illocutionary acts', acts such as asserting, requesting, commanding, christening, adjourning, etc. (16). Making a sound, the thought goes, is not the same thing as asserting something.

Cuneo's illuminating question is how to explain the 'hook-up' (48), that is the correct cohesion of illocutionary and locutionary acts. After all, pointing to the door (a locutionary act) does not by itself illuminate whether the speaker asserts, informs, or commands. Cuneo argues that normative facts are 'action-binders' – facts that are among those features in virtue of which locutionary acts count as illocutionary acts (19; 118; 184). If a speech act occurs, then the normative standing of the speaker (partly) ensures that everyone understands what was meant. Speakers have certain rights, responsibilities, or obligations that attach to their respective normative standing (e.g. the rights enjoyed by the chair of a meeting) and this, together with their "taking responsibility for a state of affairs" (67) by means of a speech act, explains how their speech acts are intelligible (64). Cuneo argues that if this account of speech acts is correct, then there is strong reason to believe that normative facts exist. In other words, normative facts make speech possible – they are both a pre-condition of speech as well as a result of it. In this first transition in his argument, Cuneo argues from the nature of speech to the existence of normative facts.

Cuneo extends this argument in chapter 3 to the claim that some of the normative features of speech are best understood as being moral (113). This is a critical part of Cuneo's argument, for here he attempts to justify the transition that not only normative facts are required to understand speech acts, but moral facts too. Speech, in Cuneo's words, "exhibits moral dimensions" (77), and he hopes to prove this by discussing different cases of speech, finding that each case is best understood and analysed by making use of moral concepts. Cuneo refers to a phenomenon of "normative entanglement" (80), according to which the moral domain is intertwined with the aesthetic, prudential, epistemic, or normative. Some parts of these concepts, such as rights, responsibilities, or obligations acquired by speakers, will best be described as moral properties, falling under moral concepts (92). For instance, wrongly exercising one's normative right of being the chair of a meeting, say by expelling someone from the meeting without warrant, is best thought of as exhibiting a moral demerit. Cuneo observes that the rights, responsibilities, and obligations that account for speech are being used in such a way that they are best described by moral concepts (106; 149).

Cuneo assumes that if a judgment-forming practice is in "good working order" (criteria include being "socially well established", "deeply entrenched" and not "subject to systematic disagreement amongst competent participants" [82]), then there are *pro tanto* reasons to take the outputs of this practice to be reliable. Moreover, he assumes that the practice of moral judgement is in good working order (83).

So, since moral terms can be applied to the evaluation of speech acts, and the practice of applying moral terms is reliable, Cuneo concludes that the best, or most 'elegant' (106), way to explain this, is hold that 'some' (89), if not a 'large measure (96), of the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of being a speaker *are* moral.

Cuneo is aware that this can only be a 'fairly modest' (107) conclusion, since if the existence of moral facts could be ruled out for independent reasons, Cuneo's argument

from cases would fail. Later, in chapters 4 and 5, Cuneo's engagement with the meta-ethical debate comes forth, and he disputes anti-realism, which he interprets as the negation of the claim that moral facts exist at all. Cuneo proceeds by addressing four cardinal arguments, attributed to Error Theory and Expressivism. The challenges that Cuneo considers are indeed pressing problems for his realism. First, how can we (reliably) gain knowledge of moral facts? Second, why assume that moral facts exist, if they do not play an explanatory role? Third, assuming that morality is categorical, how can moral facts give categorical reasons? Fourth, assuming that moral judgments would be intrinsically motivating, how can moral facts gratify this condition?

Cuneo's strategy is to allege that Error Theorists and Expressivists are committed to an incoherent 'mixed view', according to which there are "normative facts aplenty, but no moral ones" (110). This, Cuneo suggests, leads proponents of the mixed view into a dilemma: either their arguments commit them to the – implausible – rejection of practice-based norms (118-119), or they are charged with arbitrariness if they fail to distinguish practice based norms from moral ones, thus justifying their rejection of the latter but not the former.

Against the latter two challenges, Cuneo marshals an argument that is similar in spirit to Moore's objection to the sceptic. Cuneo rejects the core assumption of his anti-realist opponents (assumptions about categorical reasons and motivation, respectively, which Cuneo's interlocutors assume to be conceptual truths) and argues that the implications of the Speech Act Argument should be seen as a preferable conceptual truth, for it avoids sceptical conclusions. With regard to the two former challenges, Cuneo argues that his Speech Act Argument has revealed how practice-based norms are indistinguishable from moral ones, to the effect that rejecting the latter would commit one to rejecting the former too. Cuneo extends his discussion of Error Theory, Expressivism, and Constructivism by assessing how they would be affected if his Speech Act Argument were correct (chapter 6) and how his account fares against the argument that mind-independent facts can hardly be known to human beings (chapter 7, final chapter).

On the whole, the book is well-structured and Cuneo's arguments are well connected. He makes good use of meta-language to guide the reader, to summarize previous points, highlight their significance, and to foretell ensuing steps in the argument. The structure of the book is inviting insofar as the argument's premises are clearly laid out in the introductory chapter 1 and then, throughout the book, sequentially defended.

However, I do not think that Cuneo's main thesis, of moral realism *cum* mind-independence, is convincingly defended. To see why, it is revealing to look at the final part of Cuneo's book (chapters 4-7), for it shows how far his innovative, speech-focused approach unbinds him from commonplace metaethical dialectics. In particular, this reveals a worrying mismatch between Cuneo's main thesis (moral facts are recognition-independent) and his main argument (moral facts exist). Yet, the question of how to construe talk of moral facts is precisely what is at stake in the realism versus anti-realism debate. Opponents accuse realism with conjecturing, at no excusable expense, the existence of facts that seem, by their very nature, odd to grasp. This criticism thrives on the idea that mind-independent moral facts are too peculiar to outweigh their theoretical

costs with benefits. Cuneo's consideration of the entanglement of speech and morality may serve to point out how (metaphysically non-committal) talk of moral facts in the context of speech is warranted. But he has to give a reason *for* interpreting moral facts as being *recognition-independent,* and diminish its costs too, for his thesis to be convincing.

Surprisingly, it appears that interpreting moral facts as recognition-independent is not a direct consequence, nor a part of Cuneo's main Speech Act Argument. Instead, it rests on an autonomous line of thought in Cuneo's overall thesis. This is evident if Cuneo's argumentative chain is viewed as a three-stepped transition. He argues from the existence of normative facts (chapter 2), to the existence of moral facts (chapter 3), and finally for the interpretation of 'existence' as 'mind-independent existence' (throughout chapters 4-7). The last step is crucial because the preceding two steps would merely support the fairly unspecific idea that 'moral facts exist'. But more needs to be said about what 'existence' should entail, since it is not clear from the Speech Act Argument why 'existence' should be given the robust interpretation that Cuneo submits. It may be the case that describing certain normative aspects of the phenomenon of speech is done most pervasively by using moral terms. So much could be granted, by realists and anti-realists alike. Tentatively, it might even be said 'moral facts exist', since moral language is used to appraise the outcome of speech acts. For instance, if an agent fails to keep a promise, it is only natural to state the fact that 'this agent exhibits a moral demerit'. Similarly, understanding the value of money will invite talk of facts about its value too. Yet it is obvious that money-facts exist only in reference to banks, society, and people that actually value money. It is hard to see, therefore, why there should be no reference to agents in construing the moral facts that attach to speech. Thus, irrespective of whether Cuneo's story about the normativity of speech is accurate, his argument does not require him to claim that moral facts exist in a "recognition-independent" (188) or "mind-independent" (11) way.

Instead, Cuneo's controversial commitment results from the need to distinguish his theory from moral constructivism, which also entails the existence of moral facts, albeit not in a recognition-independent way. The related line of argument is somewhat autonomous from Cuneo's main Speech Act Argument, as it rests on the additional assumption that there have to be explanatory basic moral facts. Cuneo's objection against constructivists is that their view does not allow them to construe such explanatory basic moral facts.

Cuneo presents constructivists as being committed to the idea that some moral facts are explanatory basic and that all explanatory basic facts are recognition-dependent (188-189; 196). He presents an adequacy condition for constructivism: determining an explanatory basic moral fact cannot be based on further moral facts, for this would show that the determined moral fact is not basic after all (191). Instead, determining a moral fact will also include information about related speech acts and these, Cuneo claims, have been shown to include moral facts. Thus, there cannot be explanatory basic moral facts on constructivist accounts, for the actual explanatory basic moral facts will turn out to be the moral facts related to speech.

Cuneo is swift in dismissing constructivism. His argument serves the important function of justifying the recognition-independent feature of his theory, but it is difficult

to be convinced of this by the conclusion of Cuneo's argument against constructivism. The difficulty is that Cuneo does not pinpoint how the recognition-independence feature of moral facts is a result of the need to incorporate explanatory basic moral facts in one's theory. For instance, Cuneo does not point out why the constructivist has to accept his adequacy condition and indeed the need to account for something like explanatory basic moral facts, as Cuneo defines it.

Nevertheless, even if there were good reasons *for* the 'recognition-independence' feature, I doubt that Cuneo provides convincing arguments to defend it *against* objections. One way to challenge Cuneo is to call into question how the true, mind-independent moral facts can be reliably grasped. There might be a vast number of possible (systems of) moral beliefs that could be entertained, but surely only some of them are true. To illustrate, 'beating a beggar is good' could be a moral belief, but it does not appear to be a true one. But if there were no connection between human moral beliefs and mind-independent moral facts, then it might be unlikely that moral beliefs pick out the right moral facts rather than the wrong ones. Call this the 'epistemic challenge' against Cuneo's moral realism.

In answering this challenge, Cuneo seems pressured to consider fundamental assumptions about morality. Cuneo assumes that there are moral fixed points, such as 'it is wrong to torture for fun'. Thus, he assumes that the premise of the epistemic challenge is wrong: there are not countless many systems of moral beliefs, but only a few, and these centre around the morally fixed points (238-239). Cuneo's justification of this assumption rests on "minimally eccentric" (233) empirical assumptions about human beings. In other words, because of the beings that we are, in the world that we actually inhabit, we cannot but have certain moral beliefs.

However, using this strategy to defend realism against the epistemic challenge is not aided by the Speech Act Argument. Cuneo has to retort with an assumption about the phenomenon of morality itself: morality is (or rather, must be) such that torturing for the mere fun of it is wrong. It is another question whether this argument secures the recognition-independence feature and the Speech Act Argument does not help in this regard.

I conclude that Cuneo's book is a laudable attempt to explore new resources, in this case the phenomenon of speech, to inform and to advance the metaethical debate. His discussion of the phenomenon of speech is insightful and clear, insofar as it points out how understanding and properly utilizing speech acts requires the use of normative concepts. The part of his book that engages with the metaethical debate is intriguing, since it attempts to relate an obvious fact (we speak) to the necessity that moral facts have to exist.

It might have been hoped that Cuneo had provided a more thorough discussion or defence of his answer to the question *in what sense* moral facts exist. Although the answer forms the core of his thesis, it is not at the centre stage of his discussion. Anti-realists might thus find it unproblematic to agree with large parts of Cuneo's interpretation of speech, yet they will firmly disagree with his essential commitment to recognition-independence. Readers who seek direct support for the argument that moral facts

are mind-independent, *viz.* support for a strongly objective conception of morality, will not find their answer to be obvious. The book is thought-provoking nonetheless, and many of its arguments merit further discussion. It is a solid, worthwhile addition to the metaethical debate.

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Helen FROWE and Gerald LANG (eds.). *How We Fight: Ethics in War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 196 pp.

Nine of the ten essays making up this book were initially presented as contributions to a conference on just war held at the University of Sheffield in 2010 – the tenth, by Frances Kamm, grew out of short talks given elsewhere. The length of the essays ranges from 11 pages for the shortest (by Kamm) to 33 pages for the longest (by Mc Mahan). The common thread of all the papers is the question whether the killing of non-combatants in military operations – or even of whether engaging in a conflict which may lead to the killing of non-combatants (a situation more than common today) – can be justified, and if so, on what grounds.

In the opening essay "Varieties of Contingent Pacifism in War", Saba Bazargan defends an epistemic-based variety of contingent pacifism and rejects a proportionality-based contingent pacifism. The latter holds that, whatever harms are suffered by innocents, these harms may be legitimately inflicted only if the good expected is much greater than the harms suffered. According to Bazargan, it is hardly to be expected that such a constraint can ever be met, so that any war will bear the stigma of illegitimacy. One reason for thinking this is that when counting casualties, it is not enough to count the casualties our troops inflict on the enemy non-combatants, but one must also take into account those the enemy might inflict on our non-combatants. For Bazargan, a position that renders legitimate war impossible or quasi-impossible is implausible. Hence the author, who thinks that there are legitimate wars, has to find a new criterion for contingent pacifism, i.e. a theory stating that war can be legitimate in very rare circumstances. Bazargan's position takes into account the epistemic – and indirectly also moral – competence of government. Governments decide on whether their citizens should go to war or not. In principle, a government should only start a war if it is just. Hence, it is important for citizens to know whether their government is good at identifying just causes for war. If they think it is not, they should not follow its call to arms – unless the justice of the war is absolutely evident. Interesting as it may be, Bazargan's position seems to forget that government is not an everlasting abstract entity – we have stopped living in absolute monarchies with kings who reigned for decennia –, but that it is, at least in principle, composed of a changing personnel. Thus, the question is not one of trust in government, but of trust in President X or President Y or President Z – or in whatever other human entity decides on whether war should be declared. It is always a single individual and his staff who err, not government as such. So if Presidents of party

X have consistently erred during the 30 years or so they have been in power, this is no good reason to mistrust a President of party Y who has finally succeeded to put an end to the series of X-party Presidents.

Victor Tadros' contribution tackles the problem of punitive war and more especially the question whether we may undertake such a war, knowing that the harms our operations are going to inflict on the enemy will not only touch the culprits, but also innocent people. To quote Tadros: "The fact that we will inevitably harm innocent people [...] makes punitive war difficult to justify" (34). Yet he comes to the conclusion that if very much is at stake, harming innocents while punishing culprits may be justified and leading a punitive war may thus be justified as well. Tadros might have added here that if one cannot escape harming innocents in a punitive war, one should at least compensate their family members after the end of war. Thus, if an innocent father dies during a bombing in a punitive war, his children should be taken care of by the nation who led – and we suppose won – the punitive war. Here a general remark is appropriate: while all contributions discuss the question whether one may – generally unintentionally – kill innocent non-combatants, no contributor tackles the question whether killing innocent non-combatants might create, in one form or another, a duty of reparation – if not to the killed persons, then at least to their memory or to their close relations. The question of a *ius post bellum* – or maybe of a *debitum post bellum* – is not discussed, although it should have been.

In his "Why Not Forfeiture?", Gerald Lang shows that one should not rest content with the idea that unjust attackers forfeit their right not to be killed, but that one should also consider the question from the point of view of the victim of the attacker. Rather than merely saying that attacker forfeit their right not to be harmed – and Lang discusses and rejects nine arguments in favour of such a forfeiture –, we should consider the victim's right to inflict harm on unjust attackers. By taking such an enlarged view of the question, one has the possibility to determine *who* has a right to inflict harm. For even if we suppose – and this is an important point of the essay – that unjust attackers forfeit their right not to have harm inflicted on them, this does not necessarily mean that they forfeit it *erga omnes*, so that anybody may then harm them.

In her contribution "Self-Defense, Just War, and a Reasonable Prospect of Success", Susanne Uniacke shows that we make an important difference between the traditional notion of personal self-defence and the notion of a defensive war and that this difference is perfectly justified. Whereas in the case of personal self-defence there is no moral requirement that recourse to self-defence should only be taken if there is a reasonable chance of success, there is such a requirement in the case of a defensive war. This is due to the fact that a defensive war is undertaken by a political authority in order to defend a community. But if defending the community by leading a defensive war would cause more harm to the community than capitulating, the political authority should capitulate. A defensive war is legitimate only if there is a reasonable prospect of success. In this context, Uniacke's contribution does not differentiate between different types of defensive war. Thus, it is not the same whether one merely defends a portion of one's territory against foreign annexation or whether one defends oneself against an enemy

whose is leading a war of annihilation. Suppose that the French government had known in 1940 that the Nazis would try to kill all the French Jews and that it did not see any reasonable chance of success against the Wehrmacht. Would it not have had a moral duty to resist nevertheless, or at least to resist as long as necessary to permit all the Jews to leave France?

Kamm's contribution takes up the case of Afghan women who resorted to violence in order to get rid of the men who kept them confined at home. According to Kamm, these women were morally justified, even in killing their husband or whoever kept them confined, and this even if their actions led to a worsening of their condition.

In the title of his contribution, Adam Hossein asks whether "justified aggressors [are] a threat to the rights theory of self-defense?" He draws on the distinction between a right infringement and a right violation, the former being a permissible cause of harm, the latter not. Within the first category, he also distinguishes between the case where the victim of the harm has no claim to help from a third party and the case where such a claim exists. Against Mc Mahan, Hossein argues that posing a justified threat does not defeat liability to attack, so that "[...] non-combatants may defend themselves even from combatants who are on the side of justice" (103). These non-combatants merely infringe and do not violate the rights of the just aggressors.

Mc Mahan's contribution is, as already pointed out, the longest of the volume. In it, the author discusses the problem of "Self-Defense Against Justified Threateners", using the scenario of innocent villagers who will lose their lives in the otherwise justified bombing of a military plant. May these villagers defend themselves by killing, if need be, the bomb squad? As he admits himself, Mc Mahan tended to think that the villagers had such a right, but then changed his view, albeit without having a compelling argument. Whereas he formerly thought that the case described in the example was a 'symmetrical defense case', he now – i.e. at the time of writing the final version of the essay – thinks that this is not so. Important in his change of perspective was the rejection of the claim that the villagers had an agent-relative permission to kill the bomb squad, i.e. a permission only they had, so that a third party lacked it: "Yet if the claim that there is an agent-relative permission is to imply that it can be permissible to kill a nonliable justified threatener defensively in self-defense, it must also imply that acts of self-preservation can be permissible when they kill, as a side effect, more nonliable people than they save [...]. Those who find this counterintuitive should reject the claim that the villagers have an agent-relative permission to kill the tactical bombers in self-defense" (130). Now why, it may be asked, should they reject the claim rather than their intuition? Mc Mahan does not answer this question. Moreover, one should question Mc Mahan's general paradigm – a paradigm also shared by other authors: should we count people killed or saved to determine what is morally permissible and what is not? What are we to think of statement like the following: "If [...] the number of innocent people who will otherwise be killed is sufficiently large, morality can require people to allow their right not to be killed to be infringed by a justified threatener" (112). How do I know how many people will otherwise be killed? And even if I know how many people will otherwise be killed, how do I know how many of them are really innocent? And even if I know how many of

them are really innocent, how do I know whether the number is sufficiently large? And why only consider number? What if there were two possibilities: killing twenty young children or killing two hundred elderly people who are all going to die in the next couple of weeks?

At the end of his contribution, Mc Mahan comes to the conclusion that it is not morally permissible for the villagers to kill the bombers in self-defense. Rather than having strong arguments for this conclusion, Mc Mahan prefers to speak of the precariousness of his former position, which allowed the killing of the bombers. If the types of exercise Mc Mahan and other authors of the book invite us to make are interesting and intellectually stimulating – testing moral intuitions by confronting more or less fictitious scenarios –, I wonder what Mc Mahan and others would actually do if they were one of the villagers and if their only hope of survival consisted in destroying the plane and killing its crew. They would probably do the morally impermissible. But doing the morally impermissible does not imply doing the morally inexcusable. Do we want a morality for human beings or for saints and heroes?

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen defends the doctrine of double effect against those who maintain that intentions are irrelevant for judging the morality of an action. While it would be odd to tell someone that doing X would be morally right if he or she did it with intention A, but morally wrong if doing it with intention B – the action being, for all other matters, exactly the same –, this oddity does not entail that intentions are irrelevant *per se* in judging the morality of an action. Lippert-Rasmussen could have supplemented his defence of intentions by distinguishing between the act and the person. Thus if two persons P1 and P2 have the possibility to act and if P1 is motivated by a morally acceptable intention whereas P2 is not, then it would be better if P1 did the action. Having the right intention may have consequences for the situation after the military intervention. It is not the same whether the intention behind a so-called humanitarian intervention is merely to help the civil population or to open up new channels for investors.

Noam Zohar's contribution stresses the need to distinguish between "Risking and Protecting Lives", the title of his contribution. According to Zohar, the central question that should be asked is not a question of preventing harm to non-combatants, but of refraining from inflicting it. It is, to be more precise, the question: "May soldiers kill non-combatants in order to enhance their own safety?" (164). Criticizing the Soldiers' Safety First doctrine, as it is expounded in some military manuals, Zohar thinks that soldiers are not allowed to put their own safety before that of innocent non-combatants.

In the final essay of the volume, Helen Frowe establishes that non-combatants are liable to defensive killing if two conditions are met. On the one hand, they must make substantial contributions to their country's war effort, like producing weapons. As such, they belong to the category of indirect threats. On the other hand, the war their country is leading must be an unjust war. Yet Frowe also insists on the fact that liability to be killed does not automatically entail permissibility. Only if there is an overwhelming military necessity may non-combatants liable to be killed also be legitimately killed.

This volume provides a useful *tour d'horizon* of an ongoing topic in moral discussions relating to war, *viz.* the impact of military actions on non-combatants. All this is

intellectually sophisticated and stimulating, yet in many cases one wonders whether it has any practical relevance. Can one really imagine people telling themselves that though they are perfectly innocent, they should nevertheless let themselves be killed in war, because their being killed – as a collateral damage – is necessary? And one may also ask how they can come to have all the necessary information to decide whether they must renounce their right of self-defence. In the scenarios provided, people are supposed to have all this information. But in the real world, it is not available. So the question is: How should one act if one does not have all the necessary information? On which side should one err? The book, to conclude, provides important clues for abstract *theory*, but has only limited value for concrete *practice*.

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Stephen HOLLAND. *Public Health Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity, 2015. 276 pp.

The overall aim of this book is to introduce and discuss theoretical perspectives on, and substantive issues within, public health ethics. The author (Reader at the University of York) explains in the first part the moral and political philosophy most pertinent to public health ethics. In the second part, he discusses the ethical dimension of the most important types of public health activities. Holland makes clear from the beginning that some very pertinent issues have been left aside, e.g. resource allocation and rationing care (health economics), and also e.g. the gamete donor's putative right to anonymity (bioethics of the beginning of human life).

In the first part, the author discusses the moral and political philosophy most pertinent to public health ethics. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with moral philosophy; Chapters 3 and 4 deal with political philosophy. Chapter 1 criticizes the naïve utilitarian view of public health by discussing considerations with the same moral philosophy framework to which it belongs, i.e. from within consequentialism. More sophisticated versions of utilitarianism are discussed in order to query the naïve utilitarian view.

The same is done in chapter 2 by discussing non-consequentialist considerations that count against the naïve view. Deontology, Principlism and Virtue Ethics are considered in order to query the naïve utilitarian view that all public health interventions are justified by protecting and promoting the public's health.

Chapter 3 moves beyond moral philosophy into political philosophy. The central question of chapters 3 and 4 is: how strong is the liberal objection to public health intervention? Chapter 4 continues to apply political philosophy, but here Holland moves out of the liberal circle of ideas to critique the liberal objection. First, he looks at 'nudging', which may be called a kind of libertarian paternalism. In the last part, liberalism is juxtaposed by a non-liberal political philosophy known as communitarianism.

Holland's central idea is to understand the kinds of theoretical considerations relevant to public health ethics, then let that understanding inform deliberation. With this in mind, he turns to the ethics of some of the most important kinds of public health

activity, such as epidemiology, health concepts and promotion, health promotion as behaviour modification, harm reduction, immunization and screening.

Holland states clearly that it would be a mistake to conclude from the plethora of theories discussed and applied in this book that anything goes in public health because almost any intervention can be justified by some theory or other (241). But among the issues that make public health ethics such an interesting subject is that, apart from its practical importance, it engages with deep philosophical questions.

This in my view is the strength of Holland's book: it enlarges public health ethics and it underlines the dialogue with foundational philosophical reflection. I recommend this book therefore as a source for academic teaching in public health education of all kinds.

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Vic McCracken (ed.). *Christian Faith and Social Justice: Five Views*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 207 pp.

I write this review in my capacity as medical ethicist, working in the context of a Christian health care system. At the very beginning of what can be called bioethics (situated around 1970), bioethicists had an almost entirely one-sided way of approaching social justice: theories on justice and solidarity were virtually ignored. They simply referred to social ethics and social ethicists and took their views for granted. Social ethicists were developing ethical theories on a more content-based approach, referring to equal sharing, need, effort, contribution, merit, free market exchanges and so on. These theories were then applied to ethical debates concerning the organization of health care. In Europe, the most important theories were based on the principle of equality: everyone should have equal access to healthcare and every human person has a right to decent healthcare. This egalitarian approach, although dominant in European societies, received continuous Anglo-American critique. They had and have a renewed interest in the principle of 'merit': one has to deserve a good quality of healthcare (lifestyle suggestions, not smoking, not drinking, no drug abuse etc.). Others – and again, essentially ethicists working in the USA – have stressed individual responsibility for healthcare, based on a more individualistic approach to regulations inside societies: those who are not able to secure adequate healthcare insurance for themselves should be cared for by charity organizations (most of which are religiously inspired).

It is clear that up to 1990, bioethicists remained essentially concerned about the quality of patient-physician relationships and the ethical integration of new technologies (e.g. reproductive medicine, end-of-life decision-making, etc.). This has changed radically under pressure from the need for societal contextualization. What could be the value of proclaiming the right to receive medical treatment, as it became more and more clear that financial restraints had to be respected?

We are all facing a great challenge: how can we bring together more content-based and more procedural approaches in the ethical discussion on the organization of health care? This might also be *the* challenge facing Christian ethics in the next decades.

Social justice is about how communities ensure that all members are able to experience the benefits of our life together, and how communities rightly distribute the goods, burdens, and risks of that life. How should communities be organized to ensure that all people are treated fairly? While one need not to be a Christian to be concerned about social justice, social justice should be of particular concern to Christians (3). Christians agree that being advocates for justice is critical to being a good Christian, but once we have agreed about the importance of justice, it quickly becomes apparent that Christians vary widely in their beliefs about what this commitment entails (5).

This book sets out to make sense of these differences. Five highly respected Christian scholars introduce readers to five rival perspectives on social justice and the Christian tradition: libertarianism, liberalism, liberation theology, feminism, virtue ethics (13) The five scholars are Miguel A. De La Torre, Daniel A. Dombrowski, Jason Jewell, Elizabeth Philips and Laura Stivers.

This book is purposefully conversational and argumentative. Its contributors intend to make the case for their distinctive visions of social justice, and they intend to persuade readers that the other perspectives represented in the volume are problematic in one way or another. Readers have the opportunity to witness Christian scholars in dialogue, often disagreeing with one another, sometimes stridently so. This book aspires to offer readers a window into the constructive possibilities of such exchange (15).

I leave it to the reader to enter into these five different versions of Christian understanding of justice. In any case, I agree with another reviewer (Jack A. Hill on the cover of the book) that the editor McCracken has done a masterful job of putting five current, but very different, social justice 'voices' into critical conversation with one another. Indeed, this is ethical pedagogy at its best: no consensus is arrived at, which is not unexpected, but the conversation is stimulating and highly edifying. This book thus makes a significant contribution to the integration of social justice in Christian ethics.

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Susan MOLLER OKIN. *Women in Western Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. 413 pp.

Women in Western Political Thought was originally published in 1979, so that the reader is immediately presented with the question as to why it has been re-published. In other words, is Okin's discussion still relevant? The answer to this, I would suggest, is in the affirmative. Not only does Okin deliver a thorough overview of a topic still too often overlooked within contemporary mainstream political philosophy. Even if one disagrees with her premises and conclusions, she facilitates an invigorating re-engagement with classical texts and ideas.

In her 'new introduction' to this edition, Debra Satz reminds us that "In every country of the world, women fare worse than men on a number of important indices: income and wealth, political participation, vulnerability to sexual assault, and degrees of access to the most prestigious social positions" (ix). In other words, little to nothing has changed since Okin wrote the first published edition, which constituted the main work for her doctoral dissertation. As a political theorist, Okin was mainly concerned with how and why women have been subordinated, politically. In particular, Satz indicates, Okin wants to examine both those "[...]political philosophers who either justified the subordination of women or complacently neglected to call it out" (ix). The arguments of these philosophers, who are, after all, mainly men, need to be turned inside out, so that, as in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (ix, 12), when the bit-players become the main protagonists, something essential can finally be brought to light.

To this end, Okin discusses Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Mill in turn, before driving home the main point of her argument in the fifth part. There, in speaking about "Functionalism, Feminism and the Family", Okin insists that Whitehead's statement that "[...] the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists in a series of footnotes to Plato" (233) is in the area she is dealing with quite wrong. Whereas Plato treated women fairly, not relegating them to the private, silent domain of the family, from Aristotle onward, women's role has been 'functionalist': "[...] based on the assumption of the necessity of the male-headed nuclear family, and of women's role within it" (233). Plato's abolition of the family, according to Okin, is precisely that which allowed for real gender equality, and at the same time, it allowed for "[...] a radically new look at the subject of women and their nature" (233). Throughout her work, Okin has identified the traditional family as the main source of the 'subjugation of women' (to use Harriet Taylor and J.S. Mill's phrase). With Aristotle, Plato's insight that doing away with that traditional framework could allow women to be seen anew and to take up public and dynamic roles in politics, was destroyed. Okin's discussion of thinkers after Plato is in effect the story of men reducing women to a role, and thus denying them the fullness of humanity and freedom enjoyed by men.

Certainly Okin's concentration on the works of key political thinkers who are men serves to drive home some of her main arguments. Since Aristotle, the discourse has been by men and for men. Not only do the voices of those speaking about political philosophy, and women within society, need to change. In her "Conclusions", Okin rejects the premises that 'human nature' and 'natural family' exist in any fixed and unchanging way. Working with her openly Marxist methodology, she argues that 'nature' is a boundary that needs to be changed, if women are to become politically free. Biology is no obstacle to such a change, argues Okin, so long as those tasks that have to do with child-bearing are not shackled to those that follow, so that being pregnant, giving birth and lactating means absolutely that one must then go on to rear children in the home (299). Taking Okin's claims seriously would mean a review of social structures, but also of all the political policies that impact on such structures.

To whatever extent one agrees with Okin's arguments and conclusions, the main merit of this work is that it enables one to read through classic texts from a fresh

perspective. Okin is looking for certain themes and claims; she finds and argues for them. In that quest and presentation, presuppositions that the long-term reader of political philosophy may not have necessarily noticed previously can be startling. I would suggest that this is one of the main reasons that a republication of this engagingly written work is apropos; it sets ideas in motion, rather than letting us get too set in our ways.

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Roger SCRUTON. *The Soul of the World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. 205 pp.

The Soul of the World is a book on the philosophy of culture and more specifically an analysis of what is wrong with present day Western culture. Scruton is critical of the modern world in which scientific naturalism and atheism leave no room for what he calls 'the soul of the world': "[Scruton] argues that our personal relationships, moral intuitions, and aesthetic judgements hint at a transcendent dimension that cannot be understood through the lens of science alone. To be fully alive – and to understand what we are – is to acknowledge the reality of sacred things. [...] Scruton suggests that the highest forms of human experience and expression tell the story of our religious need, and that this search for the sacred endows the world with a soul. [...] Ultimately, a world without the sacred would be a completely different world – one in which we humans are not truly at home" (text on the cover).

What is the 'soul' in philosopher Roger Scruton's book *The Soul of the World*? Is it a figurative use of the word, or does Scruton mean it literally? The interpretation of the meaning of the many religious concepts in Scruton's book is problematic. Are these theological and metaphysical musings or do they actually mean something? Roger Scruton has published a great number of books and articles on a wide array of topics, including the history of philosophy, political philosophy, aesthetics, environmentalism, music, and animal ethics. He writes from the perspective of his personal blend of English gentry conservatism and is incredibly versatile and erudite. Despite all this, *The Soul of the World* seems to be out of touch with reason and reality. Take for example the concluding sentence: "The life of prayer rescues us from the Fall, and prepares us for a death that we can meaningfully see as a redemption, since it unites us with the soul of the world" (198). Is this theology or philosophy? 'Prayer', 'Fall', 'redemption' and 'soul' are theological concepts. Is it a category mistake to read Scruton's book as philosophy, because it is a book on theology? What does the concluding sentence mean when we look at it from a secular, philosophical perspective?

Scruton is on a quest for the so-called 'soul of the world'. According to him, meaning and value of life, existence and the world cannot be found in the scientific view of the world. At this point it seems Scruton uses the word 'soul' figuratively as synonymous with 'essence' or 'meaning'. Perhaps he is right: science gives an objective description of the world, without values. But in addition to this objective description there is also

the subjective experience of the world: how individual humans *experience* the objective world. Scruton wrestles with the gap between the *objective* world and the *subjectively* experienced world. One of the examples he provides is music. Music is more than just sounds in the perception of human beings: "So science cannot tell me who I am, let alone where, when or how" (31).

The analysis of Scruton reminds me of the work of Dutch philosopher André Klukhuhn (*De algehele geschiedenis van het denken*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2013) who argues that humans have two separate and incommensurable ways of looking at and experiencing the world: the objective perspective of science, and the subjective experience. The subjective experience of the world can be shared with other individuals through works of art. Philosophy, according to Klukhuhn, is reflection on these two perspectives and the creation of a synergy. Klukhuhn uses the theory of emergence to explain how the subjective experience emerges from the objective world. A computer screen is just a number of coloured pixels, but we humans interpret these pixels as images with meaning – for examples the letters that I am typing. Meaning and value supervene on the objective world.

This dichotomy has also been described earlier in the continental philosophical tradition of Wihelm Dilthey and Edmund Husserl as the difference between *Verstehen* (subjective experience of the world – or *Lebenswelt*) and *Erklären* (objective, scientific explanation), as Scruton acknowledges (33). But Scruton takes a different route. He seems to put forward the proposition that the theories of emergence and supervenience are not enough to bridge the gap. Instead he opens the door to religion and the transcendental, and he uses religious vocabulary, which makes his work more theology than philosophy. Scruton presents his theory of 'cognitive dualism': "[…] according to which the world can be understood in two incommensurable ways, the way of science, and the way of personal understanding" (34). "The human world, ordered by the first-person awareness, emerges from the order of nature, while remaining incommensurable with it" (76). Scruton argues that both views of the world – the objective and the subjective – are incommensurable and that a magic gap exists between the physical world and the internal world of experience. He makes a great deal of this gap and seems to suggest that there is room for religion here. He also seems to argue that material reductionists (scientific naturalists) put forward the proposition that there is no subjective dimension to experience. They do not. Reductionists argue that there is a physical causation for everything in the world, including subjective experience. Pain, for example, has a clearly defined physical cause, which can be traced and tracked in the body. But of course, the physical description of pain (the objective perspective) is completely different from how pain feels (the subjective perspective, which is called the *quale*). Without physical causes there is no subjective experience of pain, or beauty for that matter. Scruton's book is an example of the *straw man fallacy*: he builds up an argument against a non-existent opponent.

In political philosophy, Scruton is a proponent of the natural rights theory, but only in so far as it concerns the classical or political rights to life, liberty and property. He opposes extending the rights discourse toward social and cultural rights. He is a conservative and a Kantian who emphasizes the link between justice and responsibility

and being able to be responsible. People need to have rational capacities: "I am sceptical of the attempts to expand the concept of justice, so as to include the many claims made on behalf of it by socialists and their fellow travellers" (89).

Scruton introduces his life-long hero – the conservative thinker Edmund Burke and the concept of trusteeship – and offers a conservative critique of social liberalism, secularization and humanism: "The world is remade without the transcendental reference, without the encounter with sacred things, without the vows of allegiance and submission, which have no other justification than the weight of inherited duty" (94). These descriptions seem to apply to an ancient regime with a powerful aristocracy, servitude, monarchy and a strong (Catholic) church. "[…] those vows were far more deeply woven into the fabric of our experience than enlightened people tend to think, and that the world without transcendent bonds is not a variant of the world that had not yet been cleansed of them, but a completely different world, and one in which we humans are not truly at home" (95).

Would Scruton really feel more at home, one wonders, if he were to live the life of a poor tenant on an English estate, or as a footman? Or is he such an elitist that he can fathom himself only as a rich aristocrat?

Scruton is not a straightforward believer in any religion – even though he sympathizes with the Anglican Church. He is what Daniel Dennett in *Breaking the Spell* (London: Penguin, 2007) calls a 'believer in belief'. He is more concerned about the advent of atheism than the delusions and dangers of religion. This amounts to the most dangerous part of his argument: he defends unreason and flirts with religion. "I regard my argument as making room, in some measure, for the religious worldview, while stopping well short of vindicating the doctrine or practice of any particular faith" (vii). But what does this mean? What does Scruton mean with 'in some measure'? Can one be religious *in general*, without "vindicating any particular faith"? What is religion without any particular faith? It seems completely empty – because if you were to mention a particular faith, Scruton would not vindicate it. He is a believer in belief, who does not believe (or vindicate) any of it himself. In a way, Scruton has a condescending attitude towards religion, which is similar to Marx's conviction that religion is opium of the people.

Scruton makes it clear that he is a conservative by stubbornly and consistently using the male gender bias in his book, including when referring to God. He reiterates many of the points addressed in his previous work. An example is his view that humans are fundamentally different from other animals, because they enter through language into 'the realm of meaning', a realm that non-human animals lack: "It is fair to say that we live in another world from non-linguistic creatures. They live immersed in nature; we stand forever at its edge. Since emotions and motives are founded on thought, our emotional life and our motives to act will be of an entirely different kind from those other animals" (6). One wonders whether 'those other animals' include babies and mentally handicapped people? It is doubtful if Scruton's distinction between human and non-human animals is as strong as he claims to be. Ethologists like Frans de Waal have pointed out that some nonhuman animals including primates have emotional lives. Even without knowledge of ethology and biology, anyone who has lived with a companion animal will acknowledge

that animals have emotions: happy, hungry, contend, angry, irritated, joy, fear, etc. Pets have an emotional life. Scruton, however, sticks to the Kantian distinction in the separation between two moral domains based on cognitive capacities (reason).

Scruton uses impenetrable theological formulations that lead more to confusion than to clarification. For example: "[…] God *cannot* show himself in this world, except by hiding from those whom he traps into trusting him, as he trapped the Jews. The knowledge of his presence comes with the failure to find him" (10). Let's try this epistemological strategy for other existential claims, like aliens, the Loch Ness monster, or Big Foot: "The knowledge of Nessie's presence comes with the failure to find him." So, the more you search for any creature without finding it, the more evidence you have that it exists. This is not philosophy; this is plain madness. Scruton thinks the onus of an existential claim is on the person who is sceptical: "That is not an argument for the truth of religious belief, but only suggestion that will shift the onus away from the believer" (9). However, the person who makes an existential claim ('x exists') has to come up with sound (empirical) evidence. The burden of proof is on the one making an existential claim. If I claim that there are beautiful fairies living in my garden (and there are!), then I have to provide good evidence. It is not the sceptic who has to prove that there are *no* fairies living in my garden.

It seems that Scruton's reverence for religion comes from his conservatism. He clearly agrees with sociological arguments in favour of religion: "Durckheim pointed out that you don't merely *believe* a religion but (more importantly) you *belong* to it, and that disputes over religious doctrine are, as a rule, not simply arguments about abstruse questions of metaphysics but attempts to give a viable test of membership, and hence a way of identifying and excluding the heretics who threaten the community from within" (14). This sends a quiver down my spine. As a liberal and humanist, I think that individuals should choose their identity, and not have their identity imposed on them by the community in which they happen to find themselves. Also, reason requires that the question of truth prevails above the social function of belonging: religious claims are either true or not (or nonsensical, as Rudolf Carnap has argued). Secondly, moral justification prevails above traditions and cultures. Cultural practices and traditions should always be ethically justifiable. As a conservative, Scruton has a fundamental problem with reflecting on the truth claims and morality of traditions. When he explains religion, it becomes unintelligible: "But the essential character of the religious frame of mind is that of an intersubjective awareness in which the readiness for sacrifice is in some way contained" (22). From this it becomes clear that I do not have a 'religious frame of mind', because I do not have a 'readiness for sacrifice'. I do not want any sacrifices. "[For the religious believer the religious experience] "is a window onto the transcendental and an encounter with the hidden God" (25).

"The experience of the sacred is the revelation, in the midst of everyday things, of another order, in which creation and destruction are ruling principles" (183). Does this sentence mean anything? If I speak for myself, I do not know what sacred is and I have never experienced anything sacred. Or does Scruton use the word 'sacred' figuratively for 'precious'? In that case, I know what precious is to me, for example my family. Then he continues: "But communities do not endure without sacrifice" (183). What does this mean? Without having a clue to the meaning of these remarks, the question *why* Scruton

writes these unintelligible sentences comes up. As I read my interest in the psychology of the unintelligibility of Scruton's writings is stimulated: "Any reasonable monotheism will understand God not merely as transcendental, but as related to the world in the 'space of reasons', rather than in the continuum of causes. He is the answer to the question 'why?' asked of the world as a whole" (184). "[...] faith asks that we learn to live with mysteries, and not wipe them away – for in wiping them away we may wipe away the face of the world" (186).

So atheists live in a world without mysteries and have wiped away the face of the world? Does Scruton think that atheists do not have a subjective experience of the world? That atheists cannot find meaning in their lives? Scruton's argument is similar to the nihilism of Friedrich Nietzsche, namely that by abandoning belief in God (or killing god, as Nietzsche wrote) there is no meaning to life, and no moral values: life without God (or religion) is meaningless, absurd and immoral. According to Scruton, faith creates "[...] the space at the edge of reason, where faith can take root and grow" (192) But he is cautious; he is, as I noted, a believer in belief; he has faith, but does not know what it is about; he defends faith and religion in general: "But faith is not the same thing as religion. It is an attitude to the world, one that refuses to rest content with the contingency of nature. Faith looks beyond nature, asking itself what is required of *me* by way for this gift. It does not, as a rule, bother with theology; it is open to God, and actively involved in the process of making room for him [...]" (192).

According to Scruton: 'The heart of religion is ritual, and it is a mark of religion that its rituals are meticulous" (192). Scruton continues to speak positively about Orthodox Jews and their rituals. From a liberal, atheist and humanist perspective these rituals do not make any sense; the circumcision of infant boys is mutilation, Orthodox Jewish education is indoctrination and hampers critical thinking, there is no equality between men and women, no acceptance of homosexuality, no free and autonomous choice of religion, no free flow of information, etc. Would Scruton himself be at ease if he were a homosexual freethinking boy in an Orthodox Jewish family; or a girl? It seems that Scruton is so excessively infatuated with his faith in faith and his flirt with religion, ritual and traditions, that he stubbornly turns a blind eye to the victims of religions and traditions. Scruton's theory of cognitive dualism seems to be a smoke screen for his cognitive dissonance with regard to religion. His book is an example of what Karl Popper has called 'oracular philosophy'.

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Thomas SEGUIN. *Le Postmodernisme: Une utopie moderne*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012. 179 pp.

Thomas Seguin's book *Le Postmodernisme, Une utopie moderne* is a thorough investigation of a tradition, postmodernism, that has played a crucial role in the intellectual debate of the last three decades. The book has two main aims. The first is to map out the various

cultural expressions of a complex historical and conceptual category too often simply identified with a 'label'. To this end, Seguin provides what he calls an 'écologie du postmodernisme', namely an inquiry into how postmodernism has spread across several fields from philosophy to the arts, the sciences and the humanities. The second, and probably most original purpose of the book is to demonstrate that the relationship between postmodernism and modernity should be seen as one of continuity rather than fracture. Seguin suggests that the roots of postmodernism's discontinuity with modernism lie in methodological rather than philosophical concerns. The structure of the book reflects this two-fold purpose. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are devoted to the aesthetic, philosophic and scientific applications of postmodern thought respectively, and show how incredibly pervasive the influence of postmodernism across disciplines has been. In contrast, chapters 1 and 5 are aimed at elucidating the concept of postmodernism itself in its relationship with modernity and structuralism. In chapter 1, Seguin attempts to situate the postmodern tradition in the broader historical narrative of the crisis of modernity (an aspect that leads to the explanation of Seguin's original 'continuity' thesis in the Conclusion). In chapter 5, Seguin highlights the positive contribution of postmodernism as a new philosophy that stresses the free and creative possibilities of human thought (a new 'humanism' as Seguin defines it). The introductory conceptual and historical map of chapter 1 draws largely on Lyotard's classical text *La Condition Postmoderne*, which several people consider to be the manifesto of postmodernism. Seguin argues that what characterizes postmodernism is "l'érosion du principe de légitimité du savoir" that can be interpreted as "l'érosion du récit moderne, une histoire universelle de l'humanité entendue comme progrès vers une fin" (16). What alternative does postmodernism propose to this important deconstructive stance? The second chapter sketches an answer to this question in the domain of aesthetic knowledge. According to Seguin, postmodern authors blur the distinction between arts and philosophy and contest the distinction between the Discursive and the Sensible, which is so important for a great part of the modern philosophical tradition. The aesthetic experience, the transformative and creative role of images and forms become part of, and are made, the essence of the philosophical *logos*. This is because for postmodernists the best way to deal with the rising complexity of an interdependent and globalized world is to focus on the creative possibilities of the Singular and the Particular. This latter also represent the premises of a new idea of community based on difference. As Seguin puts it, 'l'indétermination du sens et des formes de la communauté est corrélativement associée, dans les discours postmodernes, à une ouverture du sens et de la communauté' (59). The importance of the role of the aesthetic world with its attention to the Singular, the focus on the multiplicity of points of view and the necessary function of judgement in the determination of any horizon of reflection is the postmodern alternative to the absence of the big *récit* and is the essence of the postmodern notion of liberty. A reformulation of the idea of philosophical knowledge in terms of action plays a crucial role in this aestheticization of knowledge. In chapter 3, Seguin argues that postmodernism is knowledge meant as *praxis* of social agents. This form of knowledge always develops within the context of sociological, political and economic circumstances. In contrast to the all-encompassing

narratives (*les narratives totalisantes*) of modernity, postmodernism favours – in a pragmatic way – "la creation, interpretation, communication" and attempts to "fonder la légitimité d'une raison entrante en synergie avec le sensible" (94). This is a new philosophy that rejects the violence of metaphysical thought and the principles of modern philosophy in their foundational dimension. It is here, according to Seguin, that such concepts as Derrida's *altérité* and *difference* start to play a crucial role in understanding human life. It is not difficult to imagine that the new postmodern perspective on knowledge also helps re-define the idea of science. In chapter 4, Seguin presents postmodernism as a challenge to a merely positivistic idea of knowledge that is based on the subject-object distinction. According to Seguin, "le post-moderne représente la disillusion de l'espoir scientist' that proceeds through 'une généalogie du savoir scientifique" (143) and is ultimately aimed at rejecting the subject-object distinction as the premise of what makes science. In chapter 5, Seguin reaches the final step of his investigation. He focuses on how the critique of the positivist paradigm of modernity, rooted in the distinction between subject and object, leads to a re-discovery of the importance of subjectivity. Far from being seen as an obstacle to knowledge, the social subject becomes the source of knowledge *par excellence* and is seen in its creative contribution to the provisional and unstable construction of social reality. This makes postmodernism very close to modernity and is probably the most original aspect of Seguin's analysis. In a nutshell, Seguin's idea is that the difference between postmodernism and modernity is based on methodological rather philosophical or ideal factors. As he puts it in a very effective passage, "le mouvement postmoderne semble similaire au modernisme dans sa structure car il entend donner sens aux changements contemporaines, il tente d'articuler ces changements dans un nouveau système d'intelligibilité" (176). Opposing the traditional idea of postmodernism as 'anti-essentialist' and 'anti-foundationalist', Seguin argues that postmodernism is a new way of founding knowledge, a different search for 'essence', which can be characterized as a form of humanism. In this new perspective, both postmodernism and modernism are linked to the philosophy of Enlightenment because they question some fundamental assumptions that have always come with the history of human culture and help build a new view of the human person in relation with nature. The difference between them, however, is in the paths they choose to reach this purpose. Rather than relying on Descartes' modern focus on method, Seguin sees postmodernism as pursuing a form of constructivism à la Giambattisto Vico. It is not the cold calculating reason of Descartes that drives this effort, but Vico's *ingenio*, "cette faculté de l'esprit qui est de discerner pour relier et conjoindre" (178). We could use Kant's language to explain Seguin's original position. For Seguin, modernity values the role of intellect whereas postmodernism prefers to rely on imagination (particularly as it is theorized in the third Kantian *Critique*). However, in different ways both modernity and postmodernism are part of the same 'Copernican revolution'. It remains to be seen whether what comes after will be a new form of idealism.

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